

# GRIST FROM THE MILL

Literary Supplement of the Shakerite

## New Hampshire Sketches

By Zelda Urdang

### Apples

We went to buy some apples.—We bought them, but brought back so much more than apples.

We brought back colors of an apple orchard—the pink and white of Maytime, the red and green of late October, and the glistening white of December.

We brought back God's work—the birth of the tree from the seed, the burst of the blossom from the bud, and the maturity of the apple from the blossom.

We brought back man's work—the planting, and the pruning, and the picking of the harvest.

We brought back sweet white flesh to caress our tongues and fill our bellies.

We bought all these with money.

### Pete

Only the very experienced can understand his gibberish. His sentences seem to be condensed into one word—with all the words running together into thick pleasing sounds. His age? He is ageless—his body stinks with filth, and his soul smells of liquor and money wasted on gold-digging women.

But he is a hard worker—he can chop wood, and carry it, and saw trees and dig holes, and obey his boss and anyone he takes a liking to—and he is faithful as a dog, and generous—he would give one the odorous shirt from his back.

### Jed

He lives on his farm with his dog and horse, and works and sleeps and smokes his pipe. Occasionally he rides to the store in his old battered horse-buggy. He is as clean as a ripened apple. His skin has the wonderful youthfulness of those who toil in the soil, and whose lives are regulated by the great forces of nature. And his cheeks are red and brown from the sun. His hair and well-kept beard are a wondrous white and shine with health. His stature is erect, and his form well molded and hardened with toil. And his voice is a slow, measured, rich mellow sound, like the tones of a long-seasoned 'cello. He never hurries—he never lags—time and life neither hurry nor lag.

### Music

The music of the mountains is in the clear, crisp moving air. The roaring wind and rain, and swishings of the grass and wheat; the chattering of chipmunks and scratching of wood mice; the warm grunts and breathing of cows, and tinkling of cowbells; a symphony of pines, and a lullaby of waters; and the whisper of the moon at night-time, and the roaring glory of the sun at day—this is mountain music.

### Store

There is a little store nearby. It is run by a man, and his wife, and father. He handles the groceries and ice cream at exorbitant prices. One can buy souvenirs and picture postcards there—and licorice—a penny a shoe string or whistle.

In the summer the summer visitors (I like to think of them as intruders) buy there; and there in the winter the native children spend a rare stray penny.

FROM time to time there have been literary magazines published in Shaker High School, but in recent years there has been little opportunity to publish student literary work of merit. It is hoped that this page will revive interest in undergraduate creative work to the point where the establishment of a literary periodical will be possible.

## Ephemera

By Jane Gleason

Frail butterflies through milkweed mist  
Are noiseless beauty.  
And the brittle beetle  
A blue hush on the vine—  
One spider trails a filet of transient silver  
No more lasting  
Than your hand in mine.

## My Dream City

By Elsie Albright

I ran backward down the walk of the floating city pinned securely with a huge silver safety pin to a bilious green star, and punched the door knob three times. A dried-up little man peered forth from a pair of rose-colored spectacles, his frosty hair swirled around his head, and his lavender night shirt studded with winking stars trailed away into an apologetic blue. I entered at his request with a slightly sinking sensation and followed him through a room where vapors wandered here and there with no aim. Some bumped into each other, sometimes merging into one, and sometimes after a violent struggle separated, going on as before. He told me that these were ideas in the making. He consented to show me the factory that was the city's sole support.

We went into a blue room where a huge brass machine was sending forth pink bubbles which were caught by the workers, labeled, and put on a shelf until used. Sometimes one escaped and bouncing to the top of the ceiling, scampered around having a fine time. On the whole, most of them were well behaved. These were dreams for good people. For small children they had bubbles dripping sugar, chocolate frosting. The bad dreams were made in a green room and as the bubbles came out they took on a green tinge, with dark red and purple spots, very revolting. As I took from my pocket a long straight pin aiming to puncture one rude, insufferable little dream, the guide shrieked, "Don't prick it, don't prick it!" But I had, and the whole city melted away like a spider web in the sun.

## Failure

By Shirley Henn

Sound sleeps my soul  
Deep down inside me.  
Lost is my goal  
Swept out to sea.

Gone is my heart,  
Torn all asunder,  
Dead every part,  
Oh, spade me under!

## Discovering A City

By Herbert Goodman

When one travels either in America or abroad he must learn how to obtain the most accurate impressions of the cities he visits. After finding the caliber of the buildings, the art, and the shops, he has only found where the city lives. It is more important to find out how the city lives. This is best accomplished after dark when the streets are filled with life; life that surges out of restaurants, theaters, cafes, night-clubs; life that is so vivid that the city itself seems alive and breathing.

Paris, although the art center of the world, is not a city of culture. Paris is a city of people. They laugh; they sing; they eat; they drink; they paint; they starve; but God they have a zest for life! Paris is the Parisians. Paris is a tiny sidewalk cafe back of Sacre Coeur in Montmartre where one can hardly eat for the pleas of the artists to "Acheter un peinture?" Paris is the expensive Cafe de la Paix where everyone speaks "American" and one sees several friends from the "good old U. S. A." Paris is a little pottery shop near Notre Dame where the typical French proprietor eats, his "dejeuner" in the back and refuses to attend to the trade until he has safely swallowed his last drop of Chianti. Paris is a bus-full of Parisians, handsome men with their faded, overworked wives; lovely mannequins proudly showing off their gowns; a gendarme, not so virtuous off-duty as a half hour ago; all laughing and talking with enormous gesticulations. That is Paris.

Look at a map of Paris; what does it tell you? Look at a photograph of some of the buildings; what does it say? But spend one evening at a sidewalk cafe anywhere in the whole city and you have discovered Paris by letting it parade before you.

## The Crimson Ring

By Nancy Green

You have a crimson ring  
In a golden setting,  
I have no ring  
Nor the means of getting.

I have a little song  
Which I sometimes sing,  
But oh my heart, it longs and longs  
To have a crimson ring.

If you were very lonesome  
For very, very long,  
And I should come and sing to you  
My funny little song,

And all your lonesomeness should pass  
When I began to sing,  
Oh would you let me wear, just once,  
Your lovely crimson ring?

## Spark

By Jack Kelleher

I saw a spark leap towards the dome of midnight blue, star spattered;  
It was only a chimney spark, but I wondered  
what it thought when it saw—such infinity.



## Re-Creation

### By Stewart Riddles

I stood alone and gazed into the night  
With Stygian blackness blanketing the sea.  
The breakers rang with pulsing melody  
Upon the hard-packed sands so dimly white.  
Susurant palms were bending gracefully  
In smooth but broken rhythmical delight,  
And sea-oats shook as if in sudden fright  
When through them salt-swept trade winds  
coursed so free.  
The still, yet throbbing quiet calmed my soul  
And freed it from its turbid, deep distress.  
Life's toilsome drudgery exacts its toll  
And leaves to fill the void but loneliness.  
Though fates conspire to hide my distant goal  
All cares dissolve at nature's cool caress.

## Rhythms

### By Van Caldwell

There's rhythm in freight trains—noisy, restless, flat-wheeled rhythm pounded out on switches and on ten-mile grades.

Watch the rhythm of the south-bound Mallard ducks; long V's moving in swift and tireless flight.

"I've Got Rhythm," sings a night-club queen while the jazz band swings it for her; high notes, raucous, primitive syncopation bred in Harlem.

Ten-hundred-thousand gallons thundering over a waterfall every hour—there's rhythm for you!

Clocks always play the same tune—loud-voiced tedious monotonies. Some clocks clatter and bang on the hour to disturb the monotony of their rhythms.

Under the barnacle-encrusted wharves the tide creeps away; it will be back again in another cycle to repeat its performance endlessly. The tide has its rhythm.

I've seen rhythm in flashing paddles on the river—dip, stroke, drip, drip; dip, stroke, drip, drip, leaving little whirlpools to bubble away in rhythm.

I've seen swimmers too—rippling muscles cutting rippling water; lithe bodies and strong arms pulling in rhythm.

Stand by a crowded thoroughfare and you'll see rhythm. You'll see a million milling people, and you'll see traffic jerking to a standstill and crawling forward—eccentric, but traffic has a rhythm all its own.

The astronomers can show you rhythm—precise mathematical calculations, cold facts of spaces, planets, satellites, orbits, rhythms.

Rhythm is the soul of machinery. The pulse of the people beats in rhythm.

You can't get away from rhythms. You'll find them everywhere:

Tricky, jerky, hopping rhythms,  
Slow, sweet rhythms,  
Quick rhythms,  
Rhythms.

## Evolution

### By Dorothy Schwemler

As I was walking down the garden path  
I saw a horrid caterpillar,  
All squashy green,  
Eating of my maple tree.  
"Oh, crawling thing," I cried,  
"Why are you here?  
What can your reason for existence be?"  
As I passed farther on  
I spied a butterfly poised on a flower.  
It was so lovely that it put the flower to shame.

## Danger at The Dial

By Miles Ryan

"A crowd is a collection of individuals who are all attending and reacting to some common object, their reactions being of a simple prepotent sort and accompanied by strong emotional responses." Thus state the sociologists. "A mob is a disorganized, impassioned crowd capable of destructive action at the least provocation." So reason the sociologists; but they avoid defining an audience.

In view of my past experience, I shall attempt to classify an audience in regard to its relation to the crowd and the mob. "An audience can be either a crowd or a mob camouflaged by a veneer known as culture." Thus state I, ex-Fellow in Sociology, AB, (final test, C), Shaker Institute of Knowledge.

My personal experience with the crowd and mob which enables me to speak as an authority? Years of night after night research with tomes in my hands, my instrument before me, and a plethora of apple cores about me. My instrument? A radio, of course, for no other apparatus known to science is better adapted to the study of that unseen menace to a listening society that is called the "studio audience."

In this treatise let us consider first the audience as an orderly crowd. We shall start at the apex of the social order with the opera and concert gathering. Here we have the crowd with its thickest coating of civilization. At all times it is exteriorly perfect. It generally maintains a rigid decorum. However, this high type of human unit has innumerable times, under the stress of emotion, cracked under its veneer, and has fallen victim to a state of boredom, or, to a state of bedlam. In this latter condition, the audience has been known to degenerate into a rabble, bursting with passion and howling incoherent phrases and curses, such as, "BRAVO, BRAVO, BELLISSIMA, DIRECTOR, DIRECTOR."

We shall now consider the audience in another light. From radio readings taken every half hour, I find this is a group of a culture less developed than that of the symphony broadcast attendance. The applause of this audience is for the comedian. Its way of making itself heard is not so refined as that of the previously mentioned crowd. It reveals animal tendencies in vociferous shouting and laughter at the wrong time, proving anti-social through these efforts to spoil any or all radio humor for the forgotten man, the listener. In this respect this type of studio audience is much akin to the political speech audience.

In our conclusion, we shall study the audience at its lowest, the mob. I have come to the conclusion from my studies that this is the audience sent over the air to torment the listener with blood-curling screams and savage cries for blood and murder. This ruthless heart-disturbing element is called by a few students of social science and many who are not, the sports broadcast. Actually a mob, but politely not called anything, this unseen public menace is always led on and incited to bedlam over the airwaves by some neurotic, demagogic maniac, called (again politely) an announcer. The wise radio listener is the man who wasn't there with his Ph—co when Louis met Baer, Omaha came home, or Ruth fanned with the bases full.

Having undoubtedly proved my point, I shall close this discussion with this curt but timely admonition: when next you find yourself in an audience, look around you for the nearest exit sign. Then walk; don't run.

\* \* \*

I ask your whole-hearted co-operation in this struggle against the menace of the mob spirit among studio audiences.

## Vanished

### By Nancy Bickel

Where are the fair, fantastic folk who strayed  
Upon our earth? Our rivers and our lakes  
Speak of departed beauty. Ocean breaks  
Sadly, recalling mightier tunes it played.  
Where are the fabulous beasts whose magic  
made  
Enchantment and delight, the singing snakes,  
The unicorns pale-flecked with shadow flakes,  
That arched their necks and stamped the earth  
and neighed?

There is no sign to show that they were here  
Or any airy imprint left on grass  
To tell of them; it does no good to peer  
At any sudden shadow cast on glass.  
We trampled the proud beauty that they wore  
They have passed on and will return no more.

## On Getting Supper

### By Lucy Robinson

Whether getting supper is a pleasure or a task depends on the attitude of those for whom you are preparing the meal.

The playful mood is rather annoying to one without much patience. When in this mood the members of your family come tripping through the kitchen and eat the apples for the salad as fast, or faster, than you can fix them; some one, while your back is turned, takes olives from the plate which you have struggled to arrange artistically. They wash their hands at the sink and drop soapy water, more or less accidentally, in the water in which you had intended to cook the corn. They flick water in your face; they stand about idly, always in your way; they talk constantly while you are endeavoring to count the teaspoons of sugar you are putting in the sauce. Finally all is collected with as few mishaps as can be expected. At the table you are rather irritable and answer all questions crossly.

The attitude most discouraging to the youthful cook is moodiness on the part of the family. It usually indicates that they have been kept waiting long, and that hunger is preying on their very souls. As you wrestle with things in the hot, steamy kitchen, your family sits around grumbling and fanning themselves. At intervals one sticks his head in at the door to inquire whether you have died. You make a snappy retort in a nasty tone, and slam the cover down on the peas. This causes the water to run over and put out the flame. Whereupon you organize a one-man expedition to find the matches which you at last find under the stove. Of course in retrieving them you hit your head and go on your way cursing. About this time a second envoy arrives to ask if you would mind if the family goes out to eat. Finally everything is ready; you have, however, forgotten to salt the peas and have left the butter on the stove so that it has to be served in a pitcher. When you have put everything on the table and have fallen into a chair yourself, everyone else is through and you eat cold food in solitary splendor. After a few such experiences you begin to wonder if the hotel idea isn't pretty good after all.

## Moonpath

### By Benita Blair

The moon dripped wax in frosted flames across  
the ebon sky,  
And spilt cold sparks along her path, while gods  
stood silent by  
To watch the stars with silver points pierce holes  
and softly glow,  
Then poke their wistful faces out at men who  
watched below.